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ABSTRACT

Some syntactic patterns of the variety of English used by students in the final year of formal learning of English are analyzed. In addition, the nature of the lectal continuum of South Asian English (SAE) is discussed, including alternative conceptions of Standard SAE and evaluation of other lects. The discussion is based on an analysis of selected aspects of 12 essays (averaging 35 sentences in length) written by college students in South India. Focus is on syntactic patterns that have not been researched significantly in earlier studies. Lexical and syntactic patterns that are formed differently than in native varieties of English or in the formal registers of SAE include the following: lexical and idiomatic features; invariant reflexive for emphasis; redundant marking of inclusion; limiter/qualifier as an enclitic; quotative; discourse adverbials; absence of subject/verb number agreement; absence of agreement between antecedent and pronoun; generic nouns; and structure of generic reference. Discussion of the patterns is centered on lectal specificity versus continuity of formal features and varietal status of the present data. It is concluded that the findings could form the basis of selection of structures to be described in a Standard SAE grammar. Contains 15 references. (LB)

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TOWARD A GRAMMAR OF SOUTH ASIAN ENGLISH: SYNTACTIC MARKERS OF LECTAL RANGE IN AN INDIGENIZED VARIETY

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I. INTRODUCTION

The far-reaching changes undergone by English in its diverse varieties in South Asia pose fundamental problems in linguistic description, language acquisition, and language teaching. \1 Which of these changes belong in a grammar of English, or of South Asian English? How do these changes come about and are acquired in non-native contexts? Which of these changes are to be accepted and taught in schools and colleges and what criteria are to be used in including or excluding usages whose regularity is not in question, and their acceptability is as yet undetermined?\2

In recent years, there has been a growing recognition of institutionalized non-native varieties of English (such as South Asian English, or SAE, hereafter) as systematic varieties of English, shaped by productive processes and exhibiting functional range comparable to native varieties. There are calls for adopting indigenized varieties of English (or IVE's, hereafter) as national or regional instructional models and taking note of them in theory construction in areas such as language variation, second language acquisition and teaching, and language processing by bilinguals. However, this type of theoretical and applied research depends crucially on the availability of detailed and systematic descriptions of such varieties, a resource not yet available in any serious sense.

Existing descriptions of IVE's cover only small areas of lexical, morphological, and phonological structure, with even less attention paid to syntax. They have been based primarily on written material, representing formal registers, such as official and academic correspondence, creative literature (fiction), journalism, and so forth. There are few descriptions of the spoken language, or of informal registers, such as conversation. In many cases, they are inexplicit with regard to the nature of the variety described, for example, the speaker/writer's educational, linguistic, occupational background, and the discourse context in which the data occur. Thus, it is not clear whether the generalizations contained in those descriptions are intended to apply to the variety as a whole (the default option), or to some specific lects within that variety, or even whether the chaacterizations such as "Indian English" refer to the varieties used by proficient speakers or learners.\3 Needless to say, this situation is not satisfactory: the variability within each indigenized variety of English (IVE, hereafter) is so great -- because of differences in schooling, proficiency, mother tongue, and functional range -- that generalizations that apply to the prestigious or highly proficient users' variety do not necessarily apply to the varieties in the middle or lower range. It is, therefore, essential that generalizations be stated relative to a lectal range, defined in terms of user characteristics (eg. educational level, occupation, mother tongue), structural criteria (phonological, morphological, lexical, syntactic, semantic, or pragmatic processes) and attitudinal evaluations ("standard," "prestigious," etc). This paper is an attempt to identify the formal (structural) correlates of different levels of an IVE.

II. AIMS AND SCOPE

The primary aim of this paper is descriptive: I have analyzed some syntactic patterns of the variety of English used by a students in the final year of formal learning of English. It is hoped that the specific structures identified here can form the basis of further studies to identify to what extent they are distinctive of this lect and to what extent they are also found in other lects of SAE. Second, I will discuss the nature of the lectal continuum of SAE -- alternative conceptions of Standard SAE and

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evaluation of other lects -- and speculate on where on that continuum the lect described here might be placed.

III. THE DATA

The following discussion is based on an analysis of selected aspects of 12 essays (averaging 35 sentences in length) written by college students in South India in a minimally structured elicitation task.\4 The students were asked to write an essay in English on "The Changing Image of the Indian Woman." The essays were written in class by second year undergraduate students, all female, majoring in the Humanities or Commerce (for the B.A., or B.Com., degree) at an "average" (private, but government subsidized) college the city of Bangalore, Karnataka state, South India. The students filled out an information questionnaire, from which the following facts were collected. Their mother tongue was Kannada (a Dravidian language). It was also the language used most often at home for all but one of them. The students had studied English as a subject for, on average, more than 13 years, most of them starting in "lower kindergarten." English was the medium of instruction at school for 73% of the students. At college, all but one (97%) chose English medium; only one had Kannada medium. Other than English and Kannada, the students knew, on average, two other languages, the choices being in descending order, Hindi, Telugu, and Tamil. A word about the choice of subjects and topic is in order here. The second year of college is the last year of formal study of English in the state of Karnataka, possibly in most other states as well. The English used by students at the end of that school year therefore represents the "end state" or "plateau state" of acquisition of English. An "average" college, located in a middle class district in the older part of the city and attended by middle class students, was chosen so as to represent the majority of learners in this particular type of schooling (as opposed to those who may attend exclusive residential schools, or the so-called "convent" schools, that is, those run by missionaries). The topic in question was chosen to elicit "culturally rooted" use of language, rather than the formulaic or stylized English characteristic of use in the "official" domain. Coincidentally, it turned out that the data collection took place just a few days after Bangalore played host to a major national conference on Indian women, which was in detail in the media. This made the essay topic salient in the students' minds, and hence easier to write about.

The scope of this paper is limited. I have focused on those syntactic patterns which have not received much attention in the earlier literature, but are, in my opinion, representative of a certain lectal range. Therefore, many of the better known syntactic traits of SAE, (eg. those involving the use of articles, tense and aspect, question formation, prepositions, and so forth), are not discussed, although they should be described in a larger picture of the variety. In that sense, the present study complements the discussion in Agnihotri et al 1984 , Hosali and Aitchison 1981, Kachru 1983, Kindersley 1938, Mehrotra 1982, Parasher 1983, Sridhar 1992, Taylor and Krishnarao 1981, Verma 1978, among others.

In the following analysis, I have not tried to present an exhaustive analysis of all the non-native characteristics found in the data. Instead, since my aim is only to <u>suggest</u> possible variables and hypotheses, I have focused on those syntactic patterns which have either not noticed or discussed in detail in earlier studies. (A more comprehensive and systematic analysis is in preparation.) I have attempted to indicate the regularity of the phenomena by presenting examples from several students and more than one example from a given student, wherever possible. Each example is identified by two numbers: the first one identifies the essay, the other refers to the sentence number.\5 In order to show that many of these structures occur in the speech of highly educated speakers as well, I have occasionally included parallel examples from the speech of an Indian research scientist, marked "PP" (for "physicist priest"), drawn from an earlier study of mine (Sridhar 1992).

IV. ANALYSIS

In this section, I will describe a number of lexical and syntactic patterns in the students' essays which are formed differently than in native varieties of English or in the formal registers of SAE. As we shall see, almost all of these structures are formed in a way that is strikingly similar to the way "corresponding" structures are formed in Kannada, the students' mother tongue. We will start with some obvious examples of language cross-over and move on to more subtle ones. We will also notice that there are some patterns that are not fully explained as resulting from transfer.

a. Lexical and idiomatic features The data contains numerous instances of literal transfer of idiomatic expressions from Kannada. While these sentences are not necessarily ungrammatical in other varieties of English, they would probably be considered unidiomatic. Out of hundreds of cases of such transfer, the following set is a sample.

1. In olden days, woman just worked like a bullock. (1:6) [cf. K. ettinante "like a bullock"]
2. Since her birth, she has been under the hands of men. (1:10) [cf. K. kay keLage under the hand" i.e., "subservient to"]
3. if her husband could die in her small age... (2:17) [cf. K. cikka "small/young"]
4. women in this century have come very forward... (2:34) [cf. K. munde ba: "progress"]
5. to a great extent that no one can imagine (6:25) [Kannada permits adjectives in this structure] 6. ...because men think their prestige will go away (8:23) [cf. K. horaTu ho:gu "be lost"]
7. if they talked to an outside man (6:9) [cf. K. horagina "of the outside" i.e., a stranger]
8. the present woman knows her rights (6: 10) [cf. K. i:gina "of the present"]
9. she does not fear to face the problems (6:29) [cf. K. hedaru "fear" (v.)]
10. Above half are conservatives (7:19) [cf. K. me:le "above" as well as "over"]
11. She was not allowed to appear in front of other men. (1:7) [cf. K. munde = "before/in front of"]
12. The people believed that education was only to men. (6:5) [cf. K. -ge, dative case marker]
13. Britishers made Indians know than even woman should be given education. (9:15) [cf. K. inclusive clitic -u: translates as both "also" and "even"]

In the following examples, an English lexical item is replaced by a related but semantically distinct word, apparently because Kannada uses only one lexeme to cover the semantic space of the two English words.

i). see for look and vice versa [cf. K. no:Du, Te. cu:Du]:

14. if we see only in the direction of art and literature (2:14)
15. Now, look the difference between...(PP)

ii). house for home [cf. K. mane]:

16. women came out of the house for studying (2: 20)

iii). legs for feet [cf. K. ka:lu]:

17. ...can stand on her own legs and face the society...(9:18)

iv). stay vs. remain [cf. K. iru]

18. even if they do not encourage it, they stay indifferent (7:15)

b. Invariant Reflexive for Emphasis

A widely used feature is the use of itself as an invariant emphatic particle regardless of the person, number, or gender of its antecedent, and the fact that its domain is not limited to noun phrases, but can be larger constituents, which can be a whole clause or sentence.

19. In ancient days, women was treated as the Goddess herself. Each of her word was respected as though it was God's order itself. (2:5)
20. It must be due to the negligence of man or some fault in women itself (2:4)

21. but the woman then were not allowed to go out itself. (6:21)
22. If you falter in the first few steps itself...(PP)

In these sentences, itself seems to function as an enclitic, corresponding to the Kannada emphatic enclitic, -e:, whose domain is also not limited to noun phrases. (For example, avanu barale: illa "he come-emph. neg." 'He didn't come at all.') In these and many other examples that follow, the IVE user grafts a mother tongue syntactic structure on to English using English lexical material. Presumably, itself functions here as the unmarked member of the set of emphatic reflexives.

c. Redundant Marking of Inclusion

In Kannada, the enclitic u: which has an "inclusive" meaning (either "and" or "even," depending on the context) often co-occurs with saha: or ku:Da "also" without sounding redundant. This seems to emphasize the importance of the included entity. This pattern seems to be carried over to English, although in English even excludes the co-occurrence of also.

23. In our country, even women also encourage. (5:19)
24. Even India is also changing. (5:2)
25. even in these days also ... (5:18)

Although (26) does not involve redundancy, it is interesting for the post-head placement of also.

26. She has gained great respect also (9:13)

This tendency for double marking is also seen in conditional expressions, such as "suppose...if...," and "if...then..."

d. Limiter/qualifier as an enclitic

The limiting function of the English only is performed in Kannada by semantic extension of the emphatic enclitic -e:, or in more formal styles, by the limiter ma:tra "only" (originally borrowed from Sanskrit), both of which follow the material they limit. This pattern is recreated in English using only as a post-modifier.

27. ...[they were] built up to live like that only (8:33)
28. ...even this might be the reason why she lived like that only (8:35)
29. all the rights ... pertained to men only (9:7)
30. In those days, women was wearing in all castes saree only (13:38)

e. Quotative

In Dravidian languages, language material, such as names, quotations, and so on, as also mental processes, such as thinking, conjecturing, or considering are marked off by a "quotative" morpheme, endu or anta in Kannada. South Indian English speakers, of all lects, often use as in this function.
31. Indian woman was considered as a machine (10:1)
32. Some of them have called her as "...." (17:9)
33. ...they were called as pre-puberty marriages. (17:24)

This use is found in Telugu speakers as well, as seen in the following examples from Sridhar 1992.

34. Seven are called as "u:rdhwalo:ka" [the upperworld] (PP)

35. Then it is called as a "ama:va:sya:" [new moon day] (PP)
36. I consider myself as successful (PP)

Note, however, that as precedes the language/cogitative material in the English sentences above, while the quotative follows it in Dravidian.

f. Discourse adverbials

In Kannada, the deictic manner adverbial hi:ge "thus/in this manner" or voTTinalli "on the whole" is a conventional device for signalling a summary or conclusion in a narrative. This use is carried over into English.

37. Like this, the position of women has been changing. (17:43)
38. Like this, she lived. (13:41)
39. Likewise we have changed very much from the past to the present. (8:38)
40. Totally, women is equal to God. (13:66) [cf. K. vottinalli lit. "in total" i.e., "on the whole"]

g. Absence of Subject - Verb Number Agreement

One of the most puzzling features of the data is the high frequency of sentences in which the verb does not agree with the subject in number. Although only about half the essays showed this trait, the fact that it was found in so many students' writing, and in so many sentences within each essay, was remarkable, especially because Kannada verbs agree with their subjects in person, number, and gender. It is unusual to find dis-agreement in such "advanced" students --the students have been learning English for over 13 years -- especially when it occurs in writing that shows impressive lexical range and syntactic diversity.

In example (41), the Kannada convention of expressing respect by the use of the plural verb form seems to have been carried over into English.

41. Akkamahadevi, a well-known poet in Kannada have written a number of vacanas. (2:13)

No such functional explanation seems to be apparent for the large number of other examples. Examples 41-49 have plural subjects and singular verb, whereas in 50-55 the pattern is reversed.

42. Though [it] is from women men comes...(1:3)
43. women is still fighting. (1:23)
44. women has also a share in her father's property. (1:30)
45. women was treated as the Goddess...(2:5)
46. women is equally doing all things like men. (8:10)
47. women of that age was not educated (2:25)
48. women was meant only for house work (2:21)
49. Women is ...(8:10)
50. the woman then were not allowed to (6:21)
51. But now the woman have changed (6:6)
52. now the present woman are seen in ... (6:12)
53. the woman then were practicing the traditions (6:13)
54. now woman are changing (6:27)
55. we must agree that all the Indian woman are not educated. (10:20)

It may be noted that the above examples are taken from five different subjects (out of 12 analyzed here (42%).

h. Absence of Agreement Between Antecedent and Pronoun

A related phenomenon is the absence of number agreement between pronouns and antecedents.

56. The women, when her husband died ... (2:16)
57. Women thought it was a sin for her to come out of the house and study, she had a very strong idea that women was meant only for house work. (2:21)
58. Women now started working outside so that she will ...(5:25)
59. they had to wait till their husbands came and serve him food (6:15)
60. The widows should... sit in the house without showing her face (6:13)
61. prior to that she was treated...[antecedent in previous sentence: women] (7:2)
62. Women should take initiative to do any work she wants to do. (8:28)
63. woman are given opportunities...whichever she chooses (9:25)
64. woman were only puppets first, they used to (9:)
65. when woman realized that they also have same rights (9:18)
66. Now women are free to come out...work for her life and she has gained great respect also. (9:13)
67. Even now...woman are treated as they use to be treated. (10:21)
68. Women began to lose her purity (17:16)
69. in which the women suffered most and it made her fertility period long (17:25)

Note that the above examples come from no less than eight different subjects. One might suppose that this anomalous agreement pattern is due to the irregular form, women. This is unlikely, because regular nouns such as husband and widow are also treated similarly (cf. 59 and 60). Nor could this pattern be attributed to mother tongue transfer, because Kannada does require verbs to agree with their subjects, and pronouns with their antecedents, in number, gender, and person. This puzzle cannot be solved if we only look for agreement in each of these sentences treated in isolation. A possible explanation seems to emerge when we consider agreement in relation to other properties of the noun phrase, and in a discourse context, as in the next section.

i. Generic Nouns Part of the clue to the agreement anomaly may lie in the use of a nominal, either singular or plural, without any article, for generic reference.

(a) Bare noun in singular as generic noun:

70. Before it was thought woman's work is only in between four walls (5:4)
71. So father thinks that daughter will be liability to him son is asset (5:37)
72. There is no field where woman is not found.(1:20)
73. We find woman working in factories, post offices (1:21)
74. and they also tried to get job (2:25)
75. some women have come forward to give up this type of slavery to man (2:30)
76. Woman stands for creator of human being (6:1)
77. Woman has changed to a great extent (6:25)
78. Nowadays, woman equals man. (7:4)
79. In India, woman is considered to be the Mother of the universe (9:5)
80. They are making man know the value of a woman. (9:23)
81. Indian woman was considered as a machine. (10:1)
82. I think Indian woman before 1950 use (sic) to be like this. (10:8)

(ii) Bare noun in the plural as generic noun

83. Husband respected his wife, brothers respected mother and sister and parents respected daughters. (2:7)
84. women in this century have come very forward. (2:42)
85. Before it was thought that women's work is ... (5:9)
86. ...women themself are enemies to women. (5:20)
87. women work at fields and at home (7:24)

This seems to be a straightforward case of transfer from Kannada, in which genericness is signalled by the use of a bare noun in either singular or plural (see Ramanujan 1964, Schiffman 1983, Sridhar 1990).

j. Structure of Generic Reference ("Generic Vacillation?")

A detailed analysis of the structure of generic reference across sentences in a given student reveals a fascinating pattern of what we may call "generic vacillation," i.e., repeated shifting back and forth between singular and plural marking of the generic noun. This vacillation is best illustrated by identifying the choice of generic noun form in running texts. (In the following examples, transition from one line to the next indicates a shift in type of generic reference. Sentences which do not contain a generic reference are marked by a dash.)

88. Text #1
1. woman 2. she...she
3. women...she
4. woman...her... her
5. women ...
6-17. woman...she...
18. the women...are 19. many working women
20-22. woman
23. women...is...her
24-26. she 27-28. ___ 29. educated woman
30. women...has...her
31. Indian woman 32. the Indian woman [from essay topic] 34. [s]he...her...she
[In the above text, there are 9 shifts from one type of generic reference to another in 34 sentences.]

89. Text #8:
1. Women 2. They 3. women 4. They
5. A woman 6-7. woman 8. she 9. she
10. women 11-20 ___ 21. women 22 - 24. ___ 25. women 26. they 27. ___
28. women ... sne 29. ___
30. the women
31. she 32. she
33. they 34. they
35. she
36. women 37. they
38. we
[8 shifts in 38 sentences]

90. Text #13
1. women...was
2. she 3. woman 4-13. she/her 15. she...have 16-17. she

18. women...was
19. she
20. some of them...she
21. she
22. some women...studies
23. she 24. women...she 25-7. she 28. she...have 29.... 30. she
[7 shifts in 30 sentences]

91. Text #18
1. women 2.___ 3.-24. she 25. women 26-32. she
[3 shifts in 32 sentences]

92. Text #20
1. woman 2. woman...have
3. women...were...girl...she
4. she
5. women...
6. she
7. they
8. she
9. some women
10. she
11. woman who lost their 12. a woman...her 13. she...her
[9 shifts in 30 sentences]

93. Text #25
1. woman 2-3. she
4. women...have...has
5. women...they 6. they
7. woman...were
8. they...her
9. woman...were...are...are...her
10. she 11.-12. woman...her...her
13. men...his...his
14. a woman...her
15. woman...are
16. we
17. women...her
18. woman...have
19. woman...are...her...her 20. she...her
21. man...a woman
22-23. women
24. she...is
25. women are ...their
26. she...her
27.-28. ___
29. woman...have...she...is...her
30. ___
31. women...women...she
32. ___
33. women

34. women...she...her
35. women are
36. she...herself 37. she...her...she
[24 shifts in 36 sentences]

V. DISCUSSION

The regular occurrence of syntactic structures analyzed above raises interesting questions relating to the description and acquisition of IVEs. I shall discuss three issues.

a. Lectal specificity versus continuity of formal features

This study has identified a number of syntactic patterns that have not been discussed previously in the literature. These include the clitic-like properties of (i) invariant emphatic reflexive, (ii) double emphasis, and (iii) the limiter; (iv) the quotative function of as, (iv) absence of verb and pronoun agreement and their possible relation to generic reference, and (v) generic vacillation. Some of these properties (eg. (i), (iii), (iv), and (vi)) are found in "higher" lects or sub-varieties of SAE, such as those used by more educated or proficient speakers, such as professionals, at least in their speech and quite possibly in their informal writing (eg. personal letters) as well (see Sridhar 1992). Other patterns, (eg. (ii) and (v) may be specific to this variety. One of the questions that need to be studied is how frequent and regular these features are in other populations with a similar background.

It is likely that the features characteristic of lower lects exist in the grammar of higher lects as well, with a stylistically governed distribution. This situation might explain what may be called the percolation of features from "lower" into "higher" lects. This question also needs to be studied empirically. The patterns identified above may serve as concrete tests in an empirical study of lectal specificity and overlap.

b. Varietal status of the present data

Kachru (1969), Mehrotra (1982), Hosali (n.d.), and many others have noted that South Asian English is a varietal (also called lectal) continuum, with its basilectal "Butler English," "broken English," and other pidgins at one end and acrolectal standard varieties understood and valued throughout the subcontinent at the other. It is interesting to speculate as to where on this continuum the variety described here is placed. I will first sketch two conceptions of the varietal continuum those of Kachru and Hosali.

According to Kachru (1983),

> "the educated variety of SAE is mainly used by those bilinguals who rank around the central point [of the cline of bilingualism, with pidgin near the zero point and the "ambilingual" point at the other end]...This includes the large number of civil servants or educators [in South Asia] who make use of typically South Asian registers of English in their respective areas of operation"(p.25).

Hosali (n.d.), on the other hand, presents a rather different picture from Kachru's. Kachru places the standard or educated variety speakers around the central point of the cline but Hosali's central point or "mesolect" is used mainly by "less educated speakers," such as "clerks, pleaders [attorneys], magistrates, and civil servants" (p.6). She describes it further as follows:

> the English has been learnt in schools; a form of speech intermediate between the almost completely normal [sic] English of many Indian writers on the one hand and the dog English of the schoolboy on the other. Many of the usages contained here occur only infrequently in the English of the highly educated. A strict boundary, however, is difficult to maintain. It is the basilect that is easiest to define. (p.6)

The acrolect, according to Hosali (n.d.26), "approximates or very nearly approximates [the British Standard]. It hardly varies grammatically from it ... at this level, Indians do not differ in grammatical usage from the British, but in idiomatic and lexical [usage]." The acrolect is said to have only "deviations"\6, while the innovations of the other lects are, presumably, "mistakes". \7 The acrolect, according to Hosali, is spoken by

> highly educated bilinguals... such as university lecturers, school teachers, journalists, radio commentators, and leaders of opinion in society. They represent a class who in Macaulay's words, "may be interpreters between us and the millions we govern -- a class of persons, Indian in blood and color but English in taste, in opinion, in morals, and in intellect" (1839, p.136).

It is unlikely that many SAE acrolect speakers would be willing to be counted among Macaulay's "Brown Sahibs." That apart, Hosali's description of acrolect speakers seems to be too elitist to be useful. The population defined by her description is minuscule and, for all the quaint adulation accorded the British standard in South Asia, not necessarily considered worthy of emulation. In fact, people who speak a variety that is too close to the native standard, British or American, are fundamentally suspect in the eyes of most South Asians: it is considered "phony," "affected," "snobbish." Surely, what most educated speakers consider "standard SAE" is much more Soth Asian than this, and much less British than this. This observation is borne out by the recent findings reported in Sahgal (1991). In a survey of 45 persons from elite, middle or upper strata of society in Delhi, she found that 47% preferred "ordinary Indian English" as their "preferred model" of English, as against 24% for British and 2% for American English. The English of Indian radio and TV newscasters were also rated relatively low (27%), presumably because they "imitated the BBC pronunciation" (p.304).

Kachru's conception of the "educated" variety (which he repeatedly pairs with the "standard") is closer to the sociolinguistic reality. It recognizes the fact that most of the "leaders of opinion" speak a recognizably South Asian variety of English, and that the use of a variety too close to a native variety alienates people. These educated speakers of South Asian English, while still a small minority of the population, nevertheless constitute a sizeable body English user. Thus, Kachru's conception of the standard or educated variety is more liberal than Hosali's. In fact, he quotes Abercrombie's comment that recognition of such a standard variety as RP, even in the British context, is "an anachronism in present day democratic society (1951:14)". Kachru also cites Kenyon's anti-elitist views on varieties of American English approvingly (1986:86-87).

Let us examine our data in light of this characterization of the foregoing discussion of the variety continuum in SAE. The richness of the vocabulary and the broad range of syntactic patterns found even in the "weakest" of our student essays rules out the pidgin or "basilect" status. The occurrence of (stigmatized?) features such as absence of verb and pronoun agreement, and the high density of features influenced by one specific language (in this Kannada, which makes it a markedly "regional" variety) would rule out its being considered standard or highly educated variety. This variety seems best described as quite higher than the basilect and probably in the mesolect range, probably toward the lower end of that range. On Kachru's cline of bilingualism, this variety would probably rank quite a bit below the central point, since educated SAE speakers are placed around the central point. We may, therefore, call it "lower mesolectal South Asian English."

The notion of a varietal (or lectal) continuum, being based on attitudinal evaluations, is by definition somewhat subjective and arbitrary. Until we have empirical data on how educated speakers evaluate different varieties on the continuum, it is rather difficult to assign a variety to a particular range. While this is not an easy task, it is likely to be made a little bit easier if the test materials are differentiated on the basis of formal syntactic properties such as those described in this paper.

VI. CONCLUSION

In this paper, I have suggested that the discussion of the South Asian English varietal continuum can be made a little bit more concrete by describing the formal properties characteristic of the different varieties. Toward this end, I have analyzed a number of non-native syntactic patterns in the English used by one specific type of South Asian learner of English in the last of year of acquiring English. By comparing this description with that of other varieties, it would be posible to separate the defining properties of different sub-varieties, including the standard variety of SAE, as well as the "common core" features of SAE. This could then form the basis of selection of structures to be described in a grammar of Standard South Asian English.

NOTES

1. Earlier versions of sections of this paper were presented at a pre-session of the Georgetown University Round Table, the Eleventh Second Language Research Forum, and at the Twelfth South Asian Languages Analysis Roundtable, Urbana. I am grateful to the audience at these meetings and at the Islamabad conference on English in South Asia, and in addition, to Indira Ayyar, Robert Baumgardner, Charles Ferguson, Braj Kachru, Yamuna Kachru, Gerhard Leitner, Cecil Nelson, Terry Odlin, and Meena Sridhar for helpful comments and criticisms. The errors that remain are mine alone. I would also like to thank the American Council of Learned Societies for a travel grant which enabled me to take part in the Islamabad conference.

2. For a recent and interesting discussion of these issues as they relate to the writing of reference grammars of pluricentric languages, see Leitner 1989; for some specific criteria, see Gonzalez 1983.

3. This distinction between those features that represent the "end-state," or "steady state" of a variety from those that mark a "stage in the acquisition process," that is, an "interlanguage" is important in relating indigenized varieties of English to theories of second language acquisition and teaching (see Sridhar and Sridhar 1986), as well as of language change.

4. I am grateful to Ms. Lakshmi Grama for assistance in collecting the data.

5. In transcribing non-English words, the following conventions are used: capital letters indicate retroflex sounds; a colon signals a long vowel.

6. explained in terms of the socio-cultural context in which English functions (Kachru 1983) 7. "outside of the linguistic code of English" (Kachru 1983)

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